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UNCLAS BOGOTA 002115

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: ACADEMIA TAKES A CLOSER LOOK AT HUMAN RIGHTS  
STATISTICS

REF: 03 BOGOTA 9589

1. (U) Sensitive but unclassified. Please protect.

2. (SBU) Three researchers in the Department of Economics at the University of London, working in conjunction with an Economics Professor at Augusta State University in Georgia with whom post had already been in contact, recently provided us with a summary report of research conducted on violence statistics related to the Colombian conflict during the period 1988 to 2002. The research supports the conclusions presented in refel on the shortcomings of statistics produced by some Colombian human rights NGOs. The report posits the year 2000 as a turning point for the GOC in terms of operational successes and improvements in the government's human rights record and attributes this turnaround primarily to Plan Colombia.

3. (SBU) The researchers used data from the Jesuit-founded Center for Popular Research and Education (CINEP). Their research corrects for skewed data that results from CINEP's reliance on strict legal definitions of "human rights violations" and "violations of international humanitarian law." Instead, the researchers focused on presenting an analysis of "bellicose actions" undertaken by all armed actors in Colombia's internal conflict. Their research also addressed the problem of overcounting by using what the researchers describe as a "more objective" methodology than that used by most Colombian human rights NGOs. With these corrections in place, the data indicated that the FARC, ELN and AUC disproportionately target civilians, and that the number of civilian casualties attributed to GOC security forces dropped dramatically beginning in 2000, primarily because of a renewed GOC focus on human rights training and improved human rights performance.

4. (U) The report is available online at <http://personal.rhul.ac.uk/pkte/126/Documents/Docs/Database%20civil%20war.pdf>. Post is happy to provide electronic copies of this report to recipients having difficulty accessing the report online. Please contact poloff Craig Conway via email ([conwaycm@state.gov](mailto:conwaycm@state.gov)) to request a copy.

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